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Iraq MHI

DRUGS OF MINERAL ORIGIN

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823*
317*

Alum

زاج سفید

Zāj-u-safid (Teh.); Sheb (Bagh., Iraq); Spati-kari (Sans.); Zamchi (Turk.); Phitkari, Phataki (Hind.).

Field 250; 126A.

Crystals of alum sulphate, with a styptic, sweetish taste. Alum is used to stop bleeding, to settle turbid water, and in the native tanning industry.—It is also a whitening agent and used as an astringent (H.F.). It is obtained in commercial quantities from Aksu and Kuchar in eastern Turkestan.

Antimonium sulphate

کل سرمه

Kuhl or Surmah (Pers.); Arjan, Surma-ka-pathar (Hind.); black sulphide of antimony, Kermes mineral, kohl.

Field 10 (Isf.), 40A.

Kohl or powdered black antimony is used throughout the East for blackening the eyelids. Introduced originally by the native doctors, hakims, as a remedy for eye diseases, it is now used by women as a cosmetic to improve their appearance. Lampblack is sometimes sold to take the place of the mineral compound.—A detailed summary of the use of kohl in southwestern Asia will form part of a forthcoming publication (H.F.). [302]

Armenian earth

کل ارمنی

Gil-i-armani (Pers., Hind.); Hajr-el-armeni (Ar.); Armenian bole or earth, ocher.

Field 196, 235; 139A.

Armenian clay consists of oxide of iron mixed with carbonate of lime. Clay of bright red contains a small amount of lime, but lighter-colored clays effervesce strongly with acids and contain less oxide of iron. Armenian bole, either by itself or mixed with red sandalwood and spices, is painted on the face and body to relieve skin affections, boils, and sores. It is one of the earths eaten by pregnant women. In Afghanistan this habit is so frequent that the term "Gil-khwar" is applied to clay or chalk eaters (see Laufer, Berthold, "Geophagy," Field Mus. Nat. Hist., Anthro. Series, 18, No. 2, 1930). [261] [843]

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Gil-i-sarshūr (Teh., Afg.) is the name given by Aitchison to the edible clay of Afghanistan. The term is applied to a clay of general domestic utility. In Iran it is the name of an earth used by women for cleansing the hair.—The two samples from Tehran were stated to be used as "hair cosmetic" and "complexion cosmetic" (H.F.).

Lead carbonate

Safid āb-i-shaikh (Teh.); Isfedaj (Ar.); Sufeda (Hind.); carbonate of lead, white lead, painters' whitening.

Field 166.

A soft, white, heavy powder, this is used in making ointment of lead carbonate, which acts as a local sedative and astringent.

Lead oxide

مردانگ نقرئی

Murdā sang-i-nugra'i, Murdā sang-i-tilā'i, Murda sang, "death stone" (Teh.); Sindur (Bom.); litharge.

W.H.M.M. 150704, 150772.

The specimens have a similar appearance; they consist of pieces of fused metal with a grayish brown or pinkish exterior. They are probably samples of the unfinished product of the action of heated air on melted lead, and not proper litharge.

Potassium nitrate

شورة قلم

Shūrah-i-qalam (Teh.); Shorah (Hind.); niter, saltpeter.

Field 231; W.H.M.M. 150854.

Obtained on a large scale from the saltpeter earth of the Punjab and Bihar, crude saltpeter occurs in small, dirty crystals, mixed with much common salt. Shūrah-i-qalam is pure saltpeter in white, crystalline, pen-shaped prisms (qalam=pen).—Niter or saltpeter is prescribed for difficult urination and for gonorrhea (H.F.).

Russian clay

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گل داغستان

Gil-i-dāghistān (Isf., Teh.).

Field 9 (Isf.), 227.

This is a grayish white clay, a compound of silica and alumina, in heavy lumps, soapy to the touch and adhesive to the tongue. The clay is brought from Daghestan in the northeastern part of the

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Caucasus, and is used with other medicaments and applied to infected parts of the body. It is also taken internally as a tonic in pregnancy, or, as Schlimmer remarks, to satisfy the "appétit des femmes enceintes."

Shāf-i-mamitā (Teh.)

شاف مامیتا

W.H.M.M. 150725.

These are small rolls of a mineral preparation about 2.5 to 3.5 cm. in length, pointed at one end. They consist of chalk, which dissolves in acid, and a quantity of red clay left insoluble. From the name Shāf, meaning suppository or clyster, they are probably used for this purpose.

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Sigillated earth

گل مخدوم

Gil-i-makhdūm (Teh.); Tukhm-makhtum (Punj.).

Field 246; 86 (Iraq).

These are two forms of sigillated earth, sealed clay or Lemnian earth. The sample from Tehran is a rounded cake of light reddish clay with white specks, 2 cm. in diameter and 1.5 cm. thick; on the upper portion there is a depression in the center made by a stamp. The clay is smooth to the touch and contains no carbonate of lime. For use in medicine it is moistened with water and applied to purulent wounds.

The samples from Iraq are circular lumps of white clay of a larger size, 3.2 cm. in diameter and 1.2 cm. thick. Each is marked above by three thumb impressions, with checkered lines below. The powdered clay is used as a desiccant for dusting abraded surfaces.

[118]

The literature on the Sacred Sealed Earth of Lemnos is very extensive. The earth is described by Dioscorides (A.D. 40) and Galen (A.D. 131–201), and was used in Europe until the 17th century. An interesting account is given in Pomet's "Histoire des Druges" (1694), and perhaps the most recent review of the subject is "Terra Sigillata: a Famous Medicament of Ancient Times," by C. J. S. Thompson (1914). Laufer ("Geophagy," pp. 164–166) gives an account of terra sigillata from Lemnos (cf. Armenian earth).

Other medicinal clays represented in the Field collection are: Gil-i-berz (263), a cosmetic used to counteract excessive perspiration;

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Gil-i-gazwin (247), a clay eaten by pregnant women; and Gil-i-batuni (258), a siliceous powder used by painters. 278* 261 •

The following is a list from other sources of edible and medicinal clays met with in Iran and India. 843 823*

Gil-i-gubrasi. Cyprus clay.

Gil-i-igritus. Cretan earth.

Gil-i-khurasani. Edible chalk.

Gil-i-misri or *Karkooti.* Egyptian earth or Nile mud taken from bed of river.

Gil-i-shamus. Samian earth (according to Dioscorides the Greeks used the earth of Samos as a means of stopping the vomiting of blood—Laufer, "Geophagy," p. 109).

Gil-i-zard. Yellow clay from Istanbul.

Chunniah (from China, lime). A soap-like, earthy substance obtained from lakes near Halla, eaten by women of Sind.

The subject of eating clays is of ethnological as well as medicinal interest. An attempt to deal with the subject from these points of view will be found in a paper on "Earth-eating and the Earth-eating Habit in India," by D. Hooper and H. H. Mann (*Mem. Asiatic Soc. Bengal,* Calcutta, 1906, pp. 240–270). [113]

Sodium carbonate (crude) 278*

نمک قلیاب 317

Namak, Qalyāb (Teh.); washing soda. 823*

W.H.M.M. 150843.

This is a white, alkaline salt, either thrown up as an efflorescent deposit on the soil (Sajji mati), or prepared from the ashes of marine plants. It consists of sodium carbonate, containing much chloride and sulphate of sodium, and insoluble matter.

Sulphur

گوگرد زرد

Gūgird-i-zard, Gūgird-i-akhmar (Teh.); Gogut (Yark.); Gandhak (Hind.).

Field 218, 241; W.H.M.M. 150731.

Yellow sulphur in powder and crystalline masses is said to come from the Mount Demavend district in Iran.—Sulphur ointment is used for skin complaints and for secondary syphilis (H.F.).